



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Natalie Burfoot Billing, Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Paulann H. Sheets, Thomas J. Skrmetti, and Elissa T. Wright.

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Billing, Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Sheets and Councilor Skrmetti
Members Absent: Councilor Wright

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent.

3. NEW BUSINESS

2004-0011 Legislative Policy (2004 Standing Referral)

Discussed

Mayor Watson thanked Representative Winkler, Representative Moukawsher, and State Senator Cook for attending tonight's meeting. Town Manager Oefinger distributed a list of potential topics that could be discussed and noted that in particular, he would like to have few minutes to talk about the Water Pollution Control Facility upgrade project. Carl Almquist and Gary Schneider distributed a timeline for this project entitled "Water Pollution Control Facility Upgrade and Improvements Project History." It was noted that as part of the last legislative session, an additional \$2 million is to be provided to the Town of Groton for the facility upgrade project. Both Representative Moukawsher and Representative Winkler discussed this additional funding. It was noted that staff is having discussions with the Town Bond Attorney and DEP officials to see how this funding can be used. As previously discussed, the full \$2 million may not be available to the Town depending on how DEP calculates the funding formula with respect to anticipated grants and loans. The \$2 million may in fact only equate to approximately \$500,000 in new money. Representative Moukawsher noted that as part of trying to get this additional money set aside for Groton, he has learned a lot about the State Plan of Conservation and Development and feels that it is being used inappropriately, and that in fact he actually spoke against the adoption of the draft plan. After additional discussion concerning the current status of the EIE and the additional requirements that the Department of Health/OPM want to put on the community, all those present agreed that a meeting should be set up between OPM Commissioner Ryan and DEP Deputy Commissioner Jane Stahl. Senator Cook indicated that she would be glad to set this meeting up. Representative Winkler noted that she will have discussions with OPM concerning the additional \$2 million grant award.

The next item discussed concerned state funding issues including ECS, which is now down to 39% from a high of 50+%. Senator Cook noted that Groton's uniqueness is not reflected in the state's funding formula and that the entire state tax system needs to be overhauled. It was noted that 22% to 25% of the state budget is for health costs, and that the state should consider an initiative whereby military communities receive additional ECS/school funding if they have military installations and families.

Additional discussion took place with respect to mandatory binding arbitration, prevailing wage,

PILOT, and the MM&E program.

A brief discussion took place with respect to base realignment activities and the recently promised state funding that is to go to the SUBASE Realignment Coalition in its efforts to defend Sub Base Groton.

A brief discussion took place with respect to the Aquarion Water Company rate increase proposal.

With respect to the City of Groton and its secession initiative, Representative Moukawsher noted that he saw no compelling reason to support such a movement, but would be obligated to forward a legislative proposal for the full consideration of the state legislature. Senator Cook noted that she is very distressed with the talk of secession and that it flies in the face of good government, and is going against the trend to consolidate and become more efficient.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.